

*Virginia
Wildlife*

FEBRUARY 1971

VOLUME XXXII / NUMBER 2

20 CENTS



Virginia Wildlife

*Dedicated to the Conservation of
Virginia's Wildlife and Related Natural Resources
and to the Betterment of
Outdoor Recreation in Virginia*

Published by VIRGINIA COMMISSION OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES, Richmond, Virginia 23230



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FEBRUARY
Volume XXXII/No. 2

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COVER: The gorgeous evening grosbeak comes to Virginia in dead of winter from its nesting range in the cool spruce belt in Canada and the northern central states. Its appearance at our bird feeders is erratic and unpredictable, but it has become a much more common winter visitor than formerly. Our artist: John W. Taylor, Edgewater, Maryland.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: One year, \$2.00; three years, \$5.00. Give check or money order, made payable to the Treasurer of Virginia, to local game commission employee or send to Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, P. O. Box 11104, Richmond, Virginia 23230.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE is published monthly at Richmond, Virginia, by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 4010 W. Broad Street. All magazine subscriptions, change of address notices, and inquiries should be sent to Box 11104, Richmond, Va. 23230. The editorial office gratefully receives for publication news items, articles, photographs, and sketches of good quality which deal with Virginia's soils, water, forests, and wildlife. The Commission assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts and illustrative material. Credit is given on material published. Permission to reprint text material is granted provided credit is given the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and VIRGINIA WILDLIFE. Clearances must be made with photographers or artists to reproduce illustrations.

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Democracy at Work

MOST readers of *Virginia Wildlife* know that there are fairly explicit "thou may" and "thou shall not" regulations governing hunting and fishing in Virginia, and that if one disobeys these injunctions he is likely to be descended upon by a game warden, clothed in the full majesty of the law, who will forthwith summon the offender to account for his indiscretion.

Most people who are affected by the constraints of these regulations also are aware that said regulations change from time to time. But to many, *why* the regulations are changed and *how* they are changed seem to remain somewhat in the realm of mystery. Actually, the process by which hunting and fishing regulations are formulated and changed is the very essence of democracy at work. All who are interested have the opportunity to participate.

The General Assembly has delegated to the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries the power to make and change hunting and fishing regulations. In practice, except in an emergency, the Commission exercises this power only once a year.

The process begins with a public hearing, scheduled this year for March 19, in Richmond, at which the Commission hears not only the recommendations of its professional staff but also those of all who wish to avail themselves of the opportunity to speak. Letters pertaining to recommended regulation changes, received prior to the hearing date, are read and considered. Now, with recommendations of both professional biologists and laymen before it, the Commission *proposes*—it does not enact, but *proposes*—regulation changes to be effective for the year beginning the following July 1. These *proposals* are then published as legal notices in newspapers throughout the state, or, if only of local application, in the localities in which they will apply.

Not less than fifteen days after these proposals are published the Commission meets again to reconsider them. This is another opportunity for public participation in the decision-making process, by letters to the Commission supporting or opposing any or all of the published proposals, by direct communication with individual Commission members, or by personal appearance at the final public hearing, scheduled this year for April 29.

In delegating to the Commission the power to make and change hunting and fishing regulations, the General Assembly went to great lengths in prescribing a procedure that insures the opportunity for public participation, and prevents the possibility of the Commission acting arbitrarily and without full knowledge of the public's interests. Only after a public hearing on proposed regulation changes, publication of proposals, and a final public hearing on adoption of the proposals, may the Commission exercise its final authority to set regulations which then have the force and effect of law. Could anything be more democratic?

Mark the dates well: March 19, 1971, the Commission will hear recommendations and propose changes for next year's hunting and fishing regulations; after another hearing on April 29, following publication of all proposals, the Commission will adopt or reject each proposal as published. All who have not spoken by then should "hold their peace," if not forever at least for another year.—J.F.Mc.

LETTERS

I read with special interest the "Hunting Coon" article in the December issue of *Virginia Wildlife*.

As one of the native sons of the Old Dominion now spending my third exodus from the state, *Virginia Wildlife* keeps me up-to-date on out-of-doors Virginia.

As a youngster in Page County, I had the great privilege of growing up with a family of coon hunters. I have stumbled through Rosser's Gap, up Dunian's Hollow and around Kennedy's Peak on many occasions with father, brothers, uncles and cousins, all of whom can spin many interesting tales of nights in the Blue Ridge and Massanutten Mountains with only a "leafy" sleeping bag from which to watch the stars.

One brother and uncle still enjoy hunting coons and can be found nearly every Saturday planning the night's journey to catch the "ole wise one" who generally eludes them on the first hunt of the year.

In the late '30's, a coon supper was quite a social event in the town. My mother had a special way of preparing coon which brought out the delicacy of the taste, and my wife repeated the process in Waynesboro in 1965 to the pleasure of a table full of Yankees. I won't reveal the recipe, but the pleasure of a coon hunt is not complete until the meat is prepared properly and eaten.

I enjoy the wildlife stories and conservation articles. Keep up the good work.

A native son enjoying California fishing.

J. G. Sedwick

Sunnyvale, California

I am enclosing a photostatic copy of an article which appeared in the *Winchester Evening Star*, and which is self explanatory.

My reason for sending this to you is that my stepson and I purchased a tract of land about six years ago which is located only about two miles from where this took place. During the time we have owned the property we have closed it to hunting, except for three members of the family who have taken a few squirrels and three buck deer in the six years. We have obtained (pheasant) eggs from the State Game Farm, and purchased incubators and brooders, to stock the place. We have been putting out feed all winter. But when articles such as this appear detailing what other landowners are doing with pesticides it makes one wonder whether we are accomplishing anything. If this stuff will kill cattle from only eating a few leaves, what is it doing to deer, rabbits, turkeys, grouse and pheasants, which must live off the land and in many instances feed right in the orchards?

I thought this might be of interest to your readers.

Albert F. Unger
Winchester

We do not have space to reproduce the whole news story enclosed with the letter, but the lead paragraph tells the story. It reads: "Fifteen head of cattle are known to be dead today in Frederick County pastures from eating leaves a local veterinarian said were contaminated by Endrin or a similar chemical spray used for control of mice in orchards." The newspaper account also noted that high winds, which blew contaminated leaves from orchards into pastures, were considered partially responsible for the cattle loss.—Ed.

QUAIL GUNS AT APPOMATTOX

By BOB GOOCH

Troy

THE McLean House, resplendent and glowing from tender care, sparkled under the bright winter sun as Cecil and I drove by in my Scout. We were en route to his Dad's Appomattox County farm for a day of quail hunting. Around the historic antebellum house the well manicured Appomattox Courthouse Historical Park rolled gently in every direction. Neatly paved roads, gleaming white historical markers and both Union and Confederate monuments dotted the landscape where the battered troops of Generals Lee and Grant met in a conciliatory atmosphere over a hundred years ago.

Green uniformed rangers of the National Park Service went busily about their duties where once men in blue and grey fidgeted while the top brass negotiated the truce that reunited the nation.

History and Americanism fairly crackled in the crisp winter air, and I fought the urge to turn in and absorb some of the atmosphere.

Hunting is prohibited in the Park, but fat bobwhite quail abound in the thousands of acres of rich farm country that surround the Park and the delightful little town of Appomattox. Cecil Woolridge and his father, both natives of the county, knew most of the landowners and we were assured of plenty of hunting territory.

It was midwinter—February 7, 1970, to be exact—but the weather was crisp and springlike, much like that distant day of peace over a century ago. Cecil, my big English setter Duke, and I had driven the 70 miles from our homes at Troy in Fluvanna County as the new day was breaking over the countryside.

We were eager to go hunting.

Fred Woolridge's greeting was brief but cordial: "Let's go."

Quail hunting in the Old Dominion is a traditional sport dating back to plantation times. Bobwhite has many admirers. Hunting starts in the fall, usually just as most of the foliage has fallen from the hardwoods, with the season west of the Blue Ridge opening the first week in November. The east of the Blue Ridge season—the territory where we were hunting—does not open until late November, but we get the advantage of extra weeks in midwinter. The eastern season extends through February 15 while the western season closes January 31.

We prize those two weeks in February. There is very little other hunting activity in eastern Virginia in February. Even the rabbit season closes January 31. Cecil and I usually select this time for a visit to his parents' farm and a bird hunt with his father.

Fred, a tobacco farmer and painting contractor, keeps a couple of good bird dogs and leans toward the picturesque English setters. His current fancies were a couple of brown and white setters named Joe and Rebel, the latter a concession to the history rich country in which he locates big conveys of fat bobwhites.

Within minutes of the time Cecil and I drove into Fred's

yard we were afield, working the rolling grain and hay fields on his farm. Rebel, Duke and Joe fanned out ahead, covering the ground thoroughly and eagerly. Cecil, Fred and I spread out and followed. The dogs were working well together, the weather was just about perfect, and the country had a birdy look.

I was optimistic.

But Fred threw a damper on my enthusiasm. "They were feeding late yesterday," he said. "May be late coming out."

"Well, we have all day." I was still hopeful.

First we worked a lush hayfield that stretched out for several acres back of Fred's house. The field had been mowed once, but I got the impression Fred had skipped the second mowing to permit the grass and lespedeza to grow into prime quail cover. This it was. We didn't score there, though.

The dogs disappeared into a patch of scrub pines interspersed with patches of broom sedge, stubborn weeds and hardy grass. Next we skirted the edge of a hardwood stand and one of Fred's tobacco fields now planted to winter wheat.

I was beginning to see the wisdom of Fred's theory about the birds sleeping in after a big feed the day before.

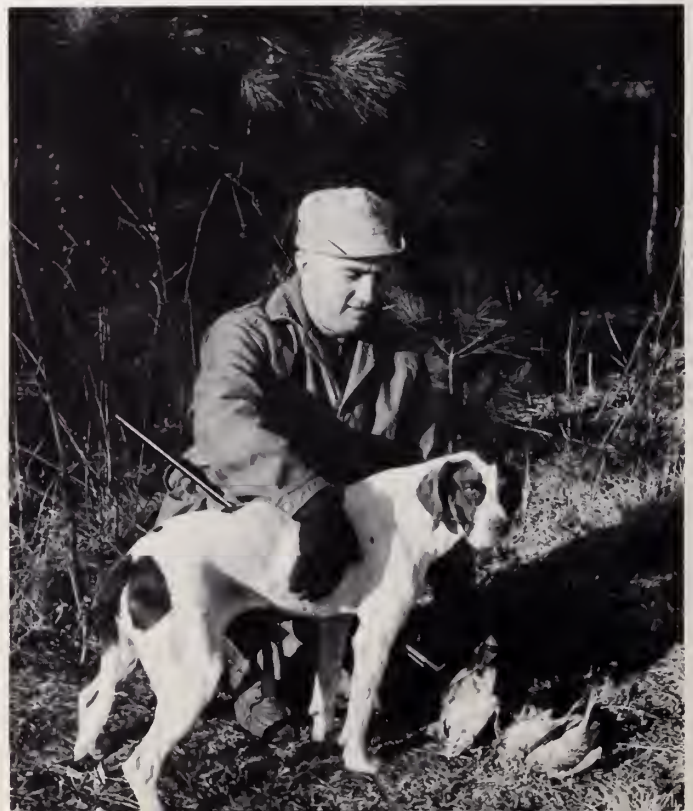
"Where is Duke?"

Cecil raised the question as we dropped into a ravine that funnels toward a gurgling creek. We started up the other side with Cecil about 10 yards in front, eyes peeled for the possibility of Duke on a point. Fred was to my right and slightly behind me. We were moving to the north with the bright sun over our right shoulders.

"There's D—!" Cecil didn't have time to finish!

Brown bombshells were suddenly exploding all around

Author Bob Gooch and a favorite bird dog.





Rebel delivers a bird to Fred.

us, though most of the covey was feeding just in front of Cecil. We were between them and their woodland sanctuary.

Then came the bombardment!

Cecil fired once and quickly shucked his big 12 gauge pump for another try. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Fred swing his automatic on a brown blur streaking for the woods. Then a bird was almost over my head! I swung to my left, somehow got in front of the tricky target and was elated to see it drop at the crack of my own 12 gauge automatic. But the simultaneous bark of another gun put doubts into my mind as to whether it was my load that had connected. Another bird popped up from nowhere ending that speculation for the moment. I fired and missed.

A Yankee tourist back at the Courthouse Park could have been startled into assuming the Appomattox County boys

had started the Civil War all over again!

But the shooting ended just as suddenly as it had started. Silence reigned again and we tried to collect our thoughts.

"Duke was on a point," said Cecil, finishing the statement he had started before the action erupted. "We walked right into the covey."

My chest popped a little as I gave my dog a pat on the head.

Then Fred picked up my bird and handed it to me. I hesitated, but he insisted he had fired at another one. That settled the question and I really felt good.

Most of the covey had roared into the woods behind us and we decided to try for the singles. Flushed quail usually head for the nearest woods, scatter out, and set down in singles or pairs until the danger passes. Later the familiar "covey" call reassembles them.

If the forest is second growth or recently cut over, the shooting can be interesting and often productive.

The successful bird hunter, working mixed farm and woodland country, keeps an eye on the flushed birds and tries to determine their destination. The inexperienced hunter, flushed with the excitement of the covey rise and anxious to examine his kill, often neglects to do this. Without the hunters' help in locating the general area in which the birds alight, the dogs have very little to go on. The flushed birds do not leave the scent a feeding covey does.

A good covey dog is not always equally as good on singles. A feeding covey puts down a lot of scent as it combs a field. However, a single bird drops down in the woods and squats immediately or scoots under the nearest shrub or brush pile. He travels a short distance at the most and leaves little scent for the dogs to work with.

"Let's go hunt the singles," someone suggested.

But most of those birds had flushed in front of us and flown directly over our heads, disappearing in the woods to our rear. No one had a chance to follow their flight. We were licked before we started.

A wide sweep into the immediate area produced nothing. Late season quail often fly greater distances when flushed than do early coveys, and it is possible we did not penetrate

(Continued on page 19)

Fred and Cecil move in on a covey point.





wi

THE first hint of the storm came at noon, when the gentle south breeze hushed, then rushed back with a new, biting fury from the north. The temperature fell quickly, and a dreary haze collected in the sullen winter sky.

The sun became a faint white ball hanging overhead, veiled by a thin veneer of swirling cloud that marked the storm's advance. All was silent in the forest, except for the scurrying sounds of wild things seeking shelter.

The sky opened and hurled an icy blanket of sleet at the wood. The onslaught ripped through the protective cloak of evergreens and into the thicket below.

Then the snow came, riding the skirt-tails of the ice storm. The breath of the storm hurled a blanket of dry flakes in a continuous explosion of white. The blizzard leaped and danced before the north wind, quickly white-washing the forest in a frigid cloak of ermine.

At midnight the wind abated and the snowflakes peppered straight down from the sky.

Winter had come to the forest.

The wind arose again with morning. It lacked the cutting fury of the previous night, but came with a muted, unyielding irreverence.

The snow drifted, tiny whirlwinds of icy whiteness snaking from drift to drift, moving in an irresolute journey like sand before desert winds.

The limbs of the evergreen drooped earthward, shouldering a burden of ice and snow. The world was transformed into an ethereal, fairyland scene. Ice crystals cloaked the naked limbs of the hardwoods. They swayed arthritically,

with a crackling noise, when the wind blew. The total landscape moaned a melancholy note of bleakness.

The juncos, jays and cardinals, caught by the sudden icy blast, huddled in the evergreens, their feathers puffed, necks tucked tightly into their bodies, resisting with their every ounce of strength the remorseless cold.

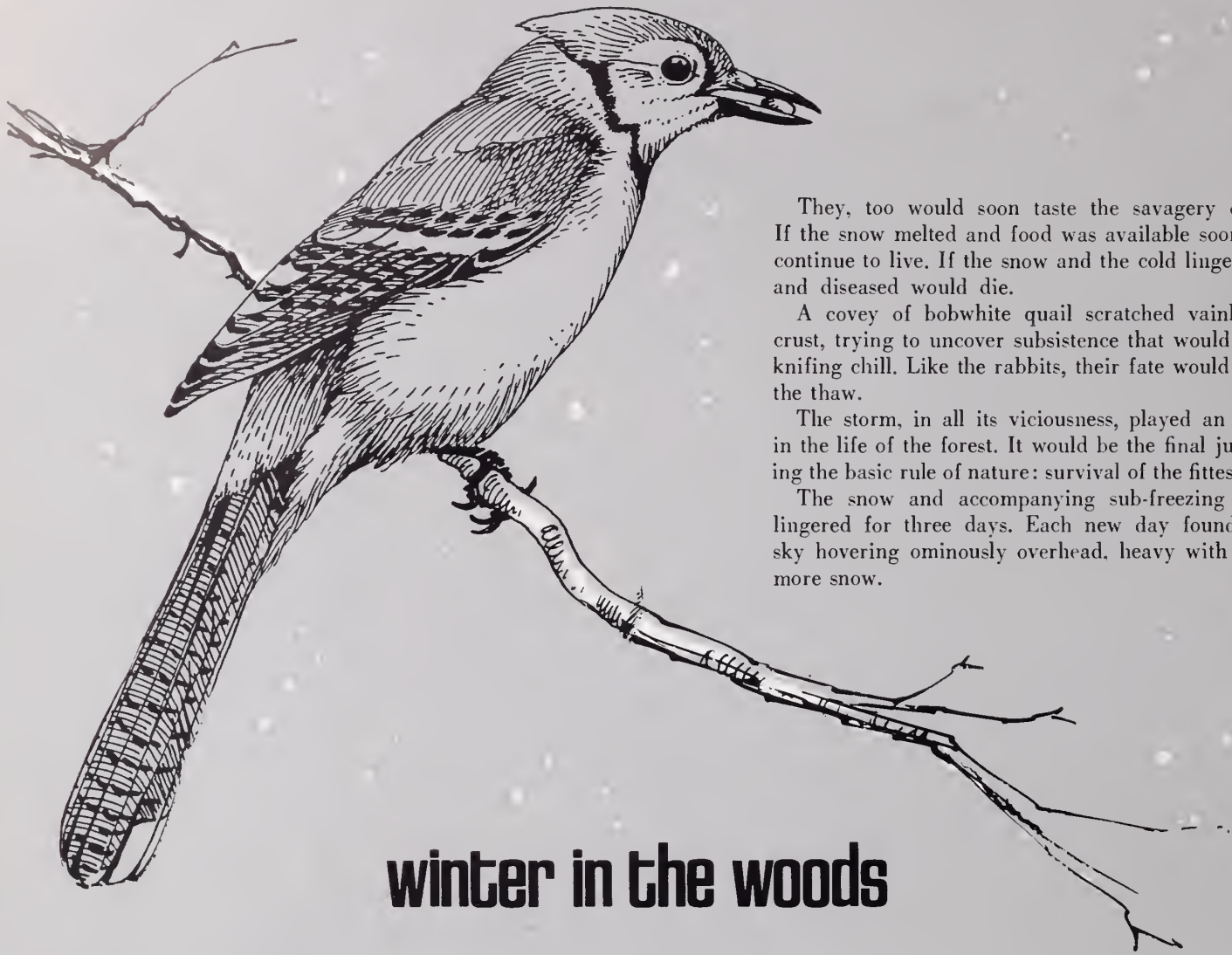
Below the snow canopy, white-footed mice were snug in subterranean chambers constructed when the drifts encompassed thickets and fallen trees. They scampered freely about in the maze, a catacomb of life provided by nature's capriciousness.

(Continued on page 8)



Winter in the woods

By GARY LANTZ



They, too would soon taste the savagery of the storm. If the snow melted and food was available soon, they would continue to live. If the snow and the cold lingered, the weak and diseased would die.

A covey of bobwhite quail scratched vainly at the icy crust, trying to uncover subsistence that would ward off the knifing chill. Like the rabbits, their fate would depend upon the thaw.

The storm, in all its viciousness, played an intrinsic role in the life of the forest. It would be the final judge in applying the basic rule of nature: survival of the fittest.

The snow and accompanying sub-freezing temperatures lingered for three days. Each new day found a slate-grey sky hovering ominously overhead, heavy with the threat of more snow.

winter in the woods

The lot of rabbits, deer and birds was to bear the brunt of the storm, depending upon their physical defense mechanisms to withstand the extremity of the elements.

The deer had sensed the coming of the storm and had begun to drift before the north wind towards shelter, yielding to the social instinct that promised warmth and safety could be found in numbers. They huddled in a copse of thick evergreens that afforded shelter from the deepening drifts. Now they would stand shoulder to shoulder, heads down, oblivious to the icy crust the north wind had bestowed upon their thick winter coats.

The fate of the deer had been decided months before. If ample winter browse was plentiful, and the size of the herd had not over-extended the available winter food supply, then resistance to cold would be higher. If the animals were weak from disease or undernourished, the relentless grip of winter would take its toll before spring.

The storm's initial blast found the cottontails scurrying for cover. Here they huddled, secure in the warmth their thick fur provided, waiting for the abatement of the north wind's harshness. When the bitter blasts dulled and the flakes fell less frequently, they pushed their way from the snow-covered clumps and wiggled their noses curiously in the crisp air.

Creatures of the forest moved little now, seemingly aware that their fate was in nature's hand. A few slumbered solemnly, sustenance drawn from bodily stores accumulated during the fruitfulness of summer. Each living thing faced its own tribulation, solely dependent upon the resistance evolutionary processes had bestowed upon them. The strong—the survivors—would pass on traits to offspring, endowing them with abilities to face future storms.

Nature showed her moods in many ways the night the clouds lifted. A silver moon silhouetted a great horned owl perched patiently in the upper reaches of a naked oak. The moon's radiance cast the forest floor in shades of liquid silver.

The owl sat solemnly. Only the occasional blink of an eye gave animation to the bird's statuary composure. The

snowy carpet mirrored the activities of the landscape. Tonight the owl would feed.

A rabbit moved cautiously from under a fallen cedar. He eyed the moon expectantly, knowing its light meant danger. He tested the air, then moved on, reassured.

The strike was lightning-swift and deadly. A shrill cry resounded throughout the icy boughs of the trees, then silence resumed her vigil. Moments later, the shadow strokes of silent wings were traced in the snow. The hunter had found its prey.

On the fourth day the sun smiled on the forest. Its radiance swept over a panorama of bitter beauty, each ice crystal catching the rays and transforming them into a sparkling, diamond array.

The temperature climbed steadily, soon passing the freezing mark. Trees began to shed their icy sheaths. Below the frosty mantle, life once again began to stir. The snow collapsed in tiny, individual avalanches from the prostrate tree-tops. Mice, who had failed to retreat from the confines of their warm tunnels, squeaked as the melting roof caved in.

Soon the forest lost its grace and was transformed into a quagmire of moisture. The evening's chill would halt the melting process, but the 'morrow's sun would restore the forest to its norm.

And all would once again live in peace . . . until someday in the future the wind would change, the sky would fill with heavy grey clouds, and a storm would come once more.

Reprinted with permission from *Outdoor Oklahoma*, official publication of Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation.





Crappie look for fallen trees and other underwater obstructions, and so do wise crappie fishermen.

Springtime Crappie

By BILL COCHRAN
Roanoke

EACH spring, thousands of crappie—an impressive number measuring a foot long and more—move into the shallows of Virginia's major impoundments offering anglers some of the fastest fishing of the season. Although the experienced fisherman can catch crappie 12 months of the year, no time are these fine panfish more vulnerable than when driven to the shoreline of such impoundments as Kerr, Gaston, Smith Mountain and South Holston by the ardor to spawn. Here they loiter within easy reach, to take on most any small lure or minnow tossed at them.

The crappie begin to grow active in March, as they feed around brush piles and other protective obstructions 8 to 15 feet deep. When the April sun pushes the water temperature into the 60s the peak fishing occurs. Then even a novice can fill his stringer with fish and his heart with delight.

During a good run, it's not uncommon for tackle shops to sell out of crappie jigs, bait dealers to grow short on minnows, and launching ramps, particularly those near metropolitan areas, to become crowded with cars and boats. The fast action may be expected to last into May when it begins to wane, sometimes sharply, as the water temperatures grow warm, sending the crappie back into the deeper waters.

Although the crappie long has been a friend of the Virginia angler, in recent years his range has been vastly expanded by the building of new impoundments such as Gaston and Smith Mountain reservoirs. These silver-sided panfish like the larger impoundments of the state where they find ample cover and abundant food in the form of young shad. Probably the best crappie "hole" in Virginia is 50,000 acre Kerr Reservoir. Those who follow the state fishing report will note that crappie angling there nearly always is listed in the excellent category from late March through early May. However, the deep, clear inland lakes don't have a monopoly on good crappie fishing. Eastern Virginia's Chickahominy Lake, for example, where giant cypress trees snarl up out of the shallow, ebony water, also yields good numbers of crappie.

No matter what lake you find them in, or what time of the year it might be, it is important to remember that crappie always move about in schools. Find one, and you've

found a whole mess.

In order to locate that first one, it is well to remember a second rudimentary rule of crappie angling: crappie like—even demand—cover. They delight in hanging around submerged trees or underwater brush piles. There is a good reason for this. The water-covered limbs and brush hold algae on which crappie feed. The obstruction's web-like configuration also attracts other crappie food such as small minnows and insects, and at the same time gives some protection from larger, predatory fish such as largemouth bass. Thus, smart crappie always look for brushy spots, and so do smart crappie fishermen.

Some anglers, particularly those at Kerr, go so far as to make their own crappie hole by anchoring in the water a clump of sweet gum brush or a large conifer tree. Often as many as over 1,000 crappie per season can be taken from such a man-made hot spot. Normally this work isn't

This Smith Mountain Lake angler is dunking minnows and catching fat, saucy crappie.



necessary, however. Nature does the same thing by toppling trees into the water during ice and wind storms and through shoreline erosion. The important thing is for the crappie fisherman to locate several such spots, either through trial and error fishing, with a fish locator, or by cruising along the shoreline when the water is down sharply visually marking trees that will be covered by the lake when the water returns to normal.

While some fishermen will hover over a particular crappie hole all day, with the faithfulness of a mother hen sticking to her nest, a productive crappie technique is the hit and run method. Anglers who use this system visit one hole, catch all the crappie there, which are eager to strike, then

roar off to another location to repeat the process. This works especially well when crappie are reluctant to strike, enabling the fisherman to cream off the easy catches at each spot.

A trick to stimulate the crappie to feed is to let the first one you hook put up a showy fight. Don't reel him in fast. Instead, let him rip and bang about through the water. Often this will excite the rest and start a feeding spree.

Crappie will strike a wide variety of lures and baits; however, anglers appear to be about equally divided between minnows and jigs as the two best offerings. Most crappie really don't seem to be partial and are willing to play the game most anyway the fisherman desires, a trait that endears them to the angling fraternity.

Many fishermen like nothing better than to dunk minnows into a crappie hole, a deadly method even for a beginner. It can be done equally well with an inexpensive, lightweight cane pole or a polished, smooth-working spinning outfit.

Attach a No. 4 Aberdeen hook to the end of the line. Six or eight inches above it, clip on a small split shot. About a foot above this, fasten a lightweight float.

Onto the thin hook, impale a minnow by hooking it through both lips, through the middle of the back or through the meaty part of the tail. Flip the minnow in and around the brushy spots and let it swim about in a provocative manner. The sudden disappearance of your float means that a crappie has taken your offering, and

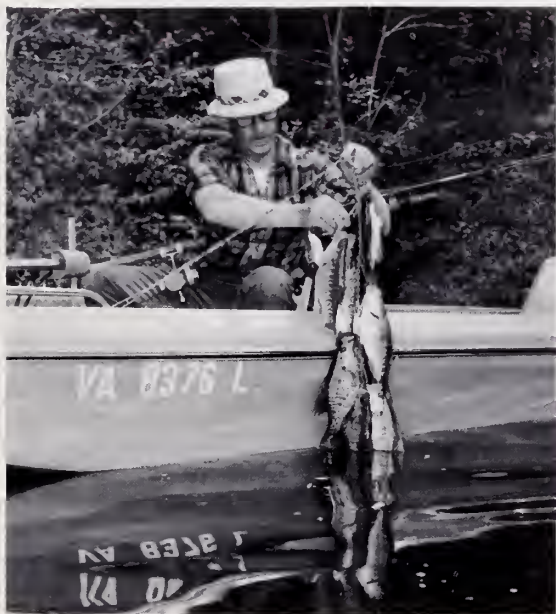
This holds true for the artificial lure fisherman as well as the minnow angler. In recent years, one of the most productive artificial lures for crappie fishing has been the small bucktail jig. The 1/64, 1/32 and 1/8 ounce sizes have been crappie killers.

Coming on strong the last year or two have been jigs tied with tails made of hackle feathers. Some of these feathered jigs are only a scant 1/90th ounce in weight and crappie gobble them up like kids after peanuts. A jig this tiny normally is fished with a small float, about the diameter of a nickel, several inches above it, depending upon the depth desired.

All crappie jigs should be tossed with lightweight tackle in order to give them the best action and to obtain the most sport from the fish. When crappie are in the extreme shallows, it usually is unwise to use any weight above the crappie or to work the offering with a float. Simply cast it out and jig it up and down slowly or retrieve it with a slow jerk-reel, jerk-reel, jerk-reel series. Remember, unlike a bass or trout, a crappie isn't going to chase a lure fast or far, so work it modestly, putting it at his level and speed. A slight bump will indicate a strike, so fish with sensitive fingers and watchful eyes, and, again, strike with love, not vengeance.

Yellow, white, green and blue appear to be the best all-around colors for crappie jigs. Although some fishermen consider the crappie to be a pushover, crappie experts believe otherwise and agree that the color of the jig makes

A hefty string taken on small feathered jigs.



Lightweight tackle will allow slab-sized crappie like these to fight like muskies.



this should be counteracted by a firm—but not too hard—strike. Remember, crappie have a paper-thin mouth and a hard strike or horsing in retrieve can rip a hook out of it.

When crappie are in the shallows during the peak of their spawning activities, often it isn't necessary, or desirable, to use a split shot above your minnow. Other times you'll need one, possibly a couple, and you'll want to slide your float up and down the line to try various depths until you begin catching crappie. A wise fisherman always will go to the level of the crappie instead of waiting for the fish to come to his offering, something crappie often are reluctant to do.

a great deal of difference. If one color isn't doing much to fill your stringer, switch to another. Changing sizes of the jig also will boost production at times.

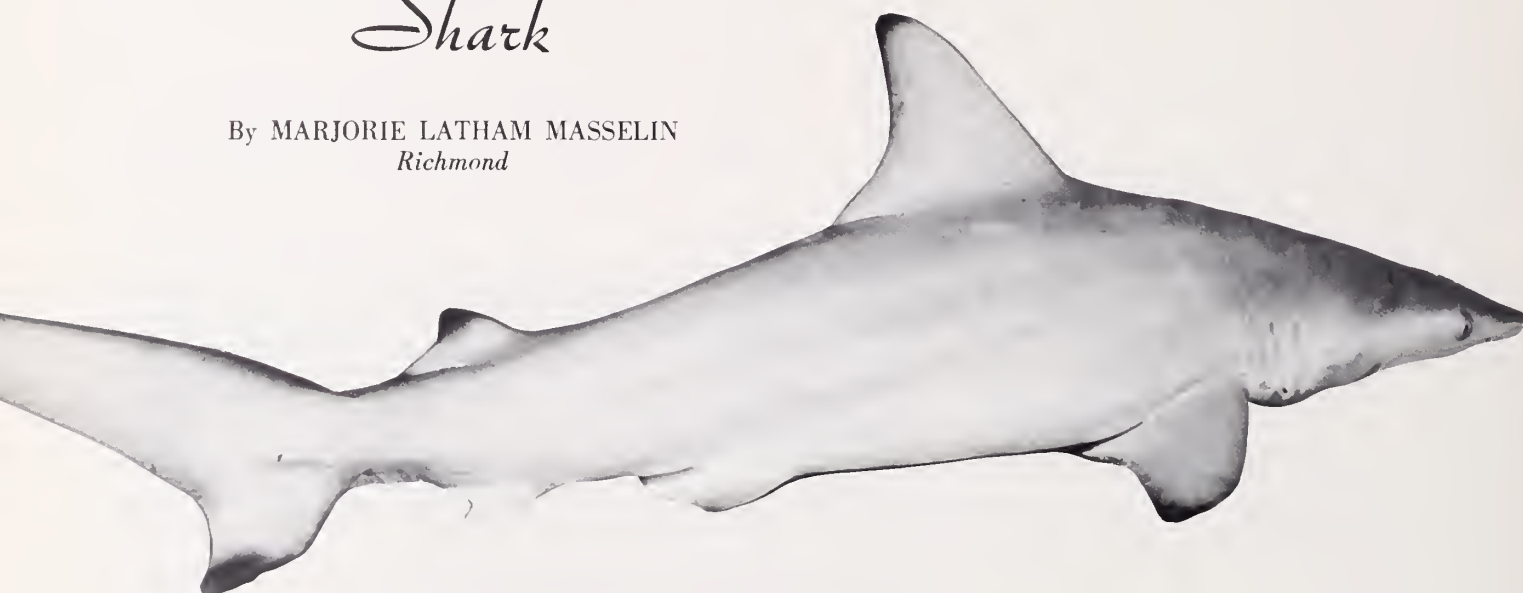
One of the best parts about catching crappie is the eating. Keep the crappie you catch alive while fishing, then clean them as soon as possible. Large ones will provide two boneless fillets. Marinate the fillets in buttermilk for one-half hour before cooking. Remove, wipe dry, salt and pepper and roll in cornmeal or cracker crumbs. Place fillets in a heavy skillet in fairly deep fat and fry them until golden brown. Man, what a way to end a crappie outing!

EVERY now and then someone asks us if there isn't *anything* we won't try at least once. I am sure there *is*, but just off hand I can't think what. While I ponder the question, come along into the kitchen and enjoy some shark with me. It is very good!

Perhaps you have already been initiated. A good many people have been, it seems, but left to my own devices, I think it doubtful that I should have been among them. I am told that I have surely eaten shark in restaurants because many serve it—though not as shark. To that I say a skeptical. "Oh? Really?" I am further advised that there is nothing better for putting a fine finish on fine furniture than the skin of the shark, and that cabinetmakers, well

Lets' Cook Shark

By MARJORIE LATHAM MASSELIN
Richmond



L. G. Kesteloo photo

aware of this, have used it for ages as sandpaper. *That* I believe. Tough as it is, one hide could very well provide an economy-minded cabinetmaker with a lifetime supply!

If you have mastered the art of skinning a catfish, you are more or less prepared for shark. Accept that as both friendly warning and advice. You are luckier than I. I got neither. All I got was the shark. The way I got it was thiswise.

About the middle of every August, my husband reminds me (as though I needed reminding!) that the first good Saturday in September the office goes deep-sea fishing. This is not the sort of excursion that interferes with making out the grocery list. One simply goes right on as usual with no fear of overcrowding the freezing compartment. The most a wife can expect to have brought back from a trip like this is one or two new jokes. Any fishing that gets done is negligible and I have often wondered if anyone even bothers to put out a line.

What happened this year I have never discovered. Perhaps the chap in charge of beverages fell ill at the last moment or the deck of cards was inadvertently left behind

on the dock, or they all ran out of conversation or got bored just sunning themselves. I don't know and I shan't guess. The great thing is, they actually caught some fish! Having caught some, they were not about to let any of their number go home empty-handed, so what they did was to divide the catch.

There are some people who *profess* to like fish, yet they will eat it only when it belongs to a socially acceptable family. There are others with more adventurous palates. These latter wind up, for better or worse, with the oddities. So this magnificent catch (I am *told* it was that) was divided in such a way that the family men got the fish on which they knew their families would not frown, while the bachelors and those whose families were grown and flown, like ours, had an assortment of . . . well . . . shark!

One of them insisted, as I have already pointed out, that shark is perfectly delicious, and that no doubt everyone had eaten it at one time or another if only he knew it; that he for one was having shark for his dinner and was glad of it. Thereupon he selected a fine young specimen and carted it off. The others followed suit, and when I peeped

into the styrofoam container which my husband deposited on the kitchen counter there it was!

"Aha!" I exclaimed, "What's this? A biology lesson for young Master Sorensen?" This five-year-old friend of ours had spent his summer holiday at the sea and become greatly preoccupied with sharks.

"Not at all, dear. This is *edible foodstuff*."

"Oh, come now . . .!"

"Oh, but it *is*, I promise you."

"Nonsense."

"That little fellow (patting the side of said shark) is good to eat."

A sigh. From me, naturally, after which he recounted the pep talk which I shall not go into a third time on the assumption that you are by now convinced, and finished by saying, "We caught five of them and five of us took them home . . . to EAT."

"Well, they were putting you on," I said and moved to dispose of the body.

"Now, now, now. You just go on about your business."

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CONSERVATIONGRAM

Commission Activities and Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

LAKE FERTILIZER DISCOVERY MAY SAVE HALF. The Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries may save up to half of the current cost of fertilizing some 10 state lakes by using a different formula of fertilizer instead of the 20-20-5 lake fertilizer now used, reports District Fisheries Biologist Norville S. Prosser, who just completed a two year study of the available formulas. Prosser's research indicated that diammonium phosphate (21-53-0), used at about half of the regular rate for 20-20-5, produced the same increase in fish food and its effects lasted longer. The diammonium phosphate is a crystalline chemical which dissolves almost instantly, a factor that Prosser and others involved in the research think may be largely responsible for its effectiveness.

The research was carried out at the Game Commission's Lake Orange facility. Lake water confined in plastic tubes immersed in the lake was treated regularly with precisely calculated quantities of all major fertilizer formulas. An oxygen meter was used periodically to measure the amount of oxygen given off from each tube and the oxygen served as a measure of the photosynthetic activity taking place in the plankton. If the savings in fertilizer costs are realized, as it appears they will be, the cost of the research will be recovered within three years.

The new formula is to be tried in as many state lakes as supplies of the chemical will permit this year. The only present known source is the Smith Douglas Division of the Borden Company. An application of 17 pounds per acre will be used, simplifying hauling and application, instead of the former 45 pounds per acre. Research will be continued concentrating on various liquid fertilizer compounds which may prove even more effective if a formula which will not upset the lake pH acidity balance can be found.

SURVEY SHOWS HUNTER INTERESTS. Deer, squirrel and rabbits were the quarry sought by the majority of the estimated 306,247 licensed Virginia hunters who participated in the 1968-69 season, according to the latest mail survey conducted by the Virginia Game Commission. Other species which ranked high in popularity were quail, turkeys and doves. An estimated 22,496 hunters hunted with bow and arrow that year. Questionnaires were sent to a two percent random sample of resident hunters selected from license applications to obtain the data which was statistically analyzed with the aid of computers. Results by species were as follows:

SPECIES	EST. NO. HUNTERS	AV. NO. TRIPS	EST. HARVEST
DEER	180,200	5	30,573
BEAR	35,247	4.5	1,721
WILD TURKEY (FALL)	69,850	4	8,174
WILD TURKEY (SPRING)	27,322	3	1,856
GRAY SQUIRREL	225,305	6	2,654,150
RABBIT	194,592	5	1,421,620
QUAIL	114,337	5	1,178,720
RUFFED GROUSE	45,022	4	80,498
DOVES (First Half)	58,580	4	1,003,920
DOVES (Last Half)	22,611	3	154,452
DUCKS	25,344	6	206,442
GEESE	12,583	6.5	21,937
COOTS	3,170	7	21,370
WOODCOCK	4,266	6	16,895
SNIFE	4,964	3	12,350
CLAPPER RAIL	1,927	3	17,882
RACCOONS	37,689	9	192,902
WOODCHUCKS	30,971	11	387,856
FOXES	19,762	9	53,817
CROWS	41,930	5	358,450



Evening grosbeak.

BIRD F

By BILL
Black



Gold

"A bird appears a thoughtless thing . . .
No doubt he has his little cares,
And very hard he often fares,
The which so patiently he bears."

—Charles Lamb

BIRDS are singular creatures. Their activity belies their fragility. In the spring, migration and mating make their behavior singular. In April and May, new birds may stop off on their way north and for anyone with bird feeders, like we have, this factor may cause the surprise

appearance from time to time of diverse species. Other species remain to make homes for the upcoming young.

Feeders concentrate one's attention to the world of the bird. One may even go so far as to construct a diary or log on who visits when and what happened.

On April 3 we put out a small bird feeder on a red ash branch and a few days later a big, wooden feeder on a branch of a red maple in our side yard. Almost immediately after putting seed in the small feeder, white-throated and English sparrows, a cardinal, tufted titmouse and a slate-colored junco came by.

Junco.



House



Cat

CEDER

EKES

g



Blue jay.

April 4—The season's first evening grosbeak showed up on the ground, but didn't fly onto the feeder.

April 5—The towhee and white-throat were content to feed on the ground. The titmouse frequented the large feeder, but seemed more nervous than either the junco or sparrow. The cardinal, too, is a jumpy bird. The titmouse will pick up a seed and quickly leave the feeder and fly up the tree where it will hold the seed on the branch between its feet while pecking the insides out of the seed. The black around its eyes makes it look big-eyed. The house finch showed up. It is reddish of head, pinkish

of breast with brown streaks, about the size of a sparrow, but more aggressive.

April 10—The nuthatch "upside down" bird visited the wood feeder, but was very flighty.

April 13—After a brief absence, the grosbeaks were back at the feeders this morning—two males and a female. One of the males seemed dominant, chasing the other male and female off the big feeder. The female went to the little feeder, but soon left when the less-dominant male tried to overcome his wounded pride by chasing her off it. Then

(Continued on next page)

Fat gray squirrel also visits feeder.



w.



a funny thing happened, the dominant male left the big feeder to chase off the other male from the little feeder. Chivalry?

April 17—Eight grosbeaks on the trees this morning. Three goldfinches congregated on the small feeder and the brown-headed cowbird made his debut. A cardinal chased the cowbird away.

April 18—A big bully bluejay descended on the wooden feeder and chased away a cardinal. Later, after the bluejay departed, a female cardinal got on feeder only to be chased away by the male. For the first time the white-throated sparrow ate from the feeder. Did it learn to do this through observation?

April 19—A young squirrel paid the wooden feeder a visit and enjoys eating some seed.

April 20—The nuthatch reported in briefly.

April 23—Titmice returned after absence of a week or two. Two came late in the afternoon and were squabbling between themselves on the maple. One flew off and came to the ash, 15 feet away, to about six feet from where I was standing as still as possible. I moved to get a picture, but the bird flew off.

April 26—Rain came and the birds were out in full force. Rain seems to stimulate their activity. Two male and one female grosbeak and the male and nondescript female cowbird checked in.

April 28—It rained again, but the sun emerged about 6 p.m. and the birds broke into feverish activity.

May 3—Spotted what may be a yellow palm warbler on a small pine near the maple. It had rained and the warbler was trying to dry itself with its beak. There's a light brown streak across its eyes and a streak around its neck and underside. The top of its head and cheeks are brown. Mr. and Mrs. Towhee are present. She is smaller and is brown on the back and head instead of black like her mate. Another young squirrel investigated the feeder and, finding it empty, departed.

May 4—Rufous towhee kept returning to the base of the maple, kicking up the long grass here in little fits like a square dancer in hip boots. He was a grouchy fellow this day, chasing away several sparrows feeding near him. A little later a little brown wren swooped down and lighted on my camera set up to take bird pictures. It then flew around in front of it and, spotting its reflection in the lens, fluttered like a humming bird for some seconds, flirting with itself.

May 5—Below the big feeder the male cardinal is feeding, the female, putting seed from his beak into her beak. A chipping sparrow joined the house sparrows on the ground.

May 10—Discovered catbird nest in a dogwood next to the robin's pine. The mother catbird is in the nest.

May 18—Seed back in the feeders. Titmouse returned briefly, but didn't tarry for long. Brown-headed cowbird came by. Decided to put the big feeder on a low table a few feet from the feeder, but only a couple feet off the ground. The sparrow and cardinals came and lit on the branch where the feeder had been originally and squabbled and looked around at the space where the feeder had been. They looked rather bewildered, or so it seemed. The male cardinal eventually saw the feeder on the table below and swooped down as if to land on it, but rared back in mid-

air and flew off into another direction as if figuring to land on the table would be dangerous. One sparrow, obviously upset about the feeder not being in its "proper" place, let out a furious squabble and flew down at the table several times, but, like the cardinal, refused to commit itself to a landing. When I returned the feeder to its proper place, it was soon invaded by several sparrows who were very hostile toward one another, each touchy about securing a place on the feeder. They pecked at one another.

May 19—Catbird visited the feeder for the first time. Wary blue jays also landed on the feeders frequently. Brown thrasher hopped nearby and picked up white pieces and flew off. Could it be the petals from fallen mock orange blossom? Cardinal, too, hopped up on the base of the ash's trunk like a woodpecker. High atop the water oaks in the rear of the yard, I espied a completely yellow bird—a warbler perhaps? It bounced from branch to branch, flipping around in the leaves.

May 29—Spotted a Baltimore oriole fly across the yard. Catbird winged around yard incessantly, perching sometimes as close as 15 feet from where I stood. They are the tamish birds around here.

So ended my two-month diary on the life of Mr. Bird. It by no means, of course, ends the continuous story of Mr. Bird's daily activity. However, even to the laymen, there are a number of apparent truths that can be gleaned about birds, even from this short period of observation.

One is Mr. Bird's need for territory. One day in early June I saw two male cardinals fighting in the street in front of the house. Like gunslingers on the dusty street of Dodge City, they faced each other, and then one would make the move to jump on the other, trying to inflict harm with the claws. Soon a car came by and they split, one bird going in one direction, the other in the opposite direction. It has been said the drive for territory is the strongest drive of all, for with territory the male bird can have all else—a mate, food, shelter.

It may not be surprising, therefore, that I never saw two male cardinals together near the feeders, nor two male towhees, nor two male catbirds. Grosbeaks, blue jays, sparrows and goldfinches may be more lenient in this respect for I saw more than one male together near the feeders with these species. However, it may not then have been the nesting time for those birds.

Another observation is need for survival. Birds tend to use each other as safety devices. If one bird lands on the feeder and begins eating without harm being done to it, others will follow in a steady stream. Birds are always on the alert, even when enjoying a good meal. They incessantly look about them for possible enemies that would swoop down on them.

Birds also seem always to be hungry, which is understandable because of their extra-high metabolism. They possess the highest body heat of any animal (104 to 112 degrees F.).

Birds are temperamental and argue among themselves, displaying their ire with noise and attempts to jump on one another. This is especially apparent when birds think their access to food will be, or is being, frustrated.

Their quest for property, for a mate and for the freedom to permit their efforts to keep abreast of their wants may not make Mr. Bird basically too much a departure from late 20th Century American man.

Little *Extra* Touches That Add to Fishing Pleasure

By DWIGHT L. PETERSON
Clinton, North Carolina

I WAS fishing a small stream known to be excellent waters for bluegill and red-breast (robin) bream. The boat drifted slowly with the current and I kept it corrected with the paddle gripped in my left hand. My right hand held a cane pole rigged with line, cork, hook and earthworm bait. My wrist was beginning to ache from the constant lifting and flipping motion I was giving the pole. The ache would not have been nearly as noticeable if my success with the fish had been a bit more triumphant. After missing several strikes and losing my earthworm bait with almost each strike, I was beginning to think it was just *one of those days*. A couple of hours dragged by and I finally got it through my thick skull that something needed correcting . . . and quick!

I paddled the boat over to a sand bar, got out, stretched and looked over my skimpy string of fish. Then, I picked up my cane pole and examined my rig. What could I do to improve my catch? The fish were certainly cooperating, but I was missing at least 80% of the strikes . . . maybe more. There seemed to be nothing wrong with the cane pole. It was light, easy to handle and limber, or stiff, enough for good handling. The length of line was correct, or at least what I consider correct: about the length of the pole or an inch or two longer. And I always use a small cork, with no split-lead shot on the line for weight, because I prefer the bait to sink naturally, or as naturally as possible for this type of fishing (dropping is what most fishermen call this type of fishing). The line was eight pound test mono. Thin and almost invisible in the water. I decided there was nothing that could be improved concerning these things. That is, improved to the extent that it would step up production and put those fish out of the wet onto the dry.

Then, I looked at my hook: a number eight long shank which I fancy for bream fishing. It was in good shape and needle sharp. Nothing wrong here, I thought. But there was something, if I could just figure it out, that would increase my catch. I tried to think of everything, no matter how unimportant or minor it seemed. Was I letting the boat drift too fast with the current? Was I jerking too quick to snag the fish? Was I letting the fish take the bait too long before jerking?

Almost without thought I began to examine and roll between my fingers one of the earthworms I was using for bait. They were thick and healthy. The type that's hard to knock off a hook. But I was losing one with almost every strike, or losing at least half of one where the fish would pull him apart.

That was it! It was simple. The fish were hitting at the dangling ends of the worm rather than taking the entire worm. They did this sometimes when they were not in that hungry, savage, striking notion.

I quickly tied a loop in my line above the bottom hook. I tied it securely so the loop would not slip. Then I looped another hook on this loop. I prepared it so the bottom of the top hook was about even with the eye of the bottom hook on the end of the line. Taking an earthworm, I began threading the worm, starting about his mid-section, on the bottom hook. I let the barb of the hook come out at the end of the worm. Then I simply hooked, or partly threaded, the other end of the worm on the top hook.



This rig took fish that had been stealing bait.

Once I had commenced fishing again I checked the bait to see if it looked natural in the water. I was afraid it would look bulky. But it was A-OK. I began to snag those fish. I'm satisfied my success was increased at least 50%.

This is what I consider to be the extra touch that makes fishing more enjoyable: that is, trying to figure out the why's, how's, etc. This is what I had done. I had asked *why*, and had successfully answered. Thus, I arrived at the *how* for a remedy. Problems of everyday life and occupation were far from my mind. I was concentrating on how to catch those fish. I was on a voyage from the daily



Pliers, thread, treble hooks and squirrel tail in tackle box permit the angler to experiment with the "extra touches."

routines and challenges, into the realms and dimensions of different challenges. This is fishing. This is why it is a relaxing sport.

If you are on a fishing trip, and John Doe has said that if you'll do so and so, or if you will use such and such a lure you'll catch all the fish the limit will allow, then,

maybe, try it. Especially if you are in unfamiliar water. He may know what he's talking about. And, anyway, it is a beginning. But suppose you aren't catching anything after you follow John Doe's recommendations. Well, there is the chance that the fish aren't biting . . . period. That does happen (thank goodness, else all the fish would soon be gone). But don't give up until you've used that old noodle a little. Put the wheels to turning and try to come up with something. There are problems that involve the weather, wind, where you are fishing, the type and color of the water, the habitat, the natural environment, what natural food the fish in a certain locality prefer and many other things. All these problems are a challenge and propose questions to be answered. Also, *what* kind of fish are you after to begin with, or are you out for broke . . . anything that will bite.

I was in this frame of mind several years ago when fishing a freshwater stream. I was home on leave from military service and it had been quite a spell since I had wet a line. Although the lure I was using was designed for largemouth bass, I was out for broke. Anything that hit it, and I could catch it, was all right with me. The lure was a heavy, sinking type, colored frog green with black spots, and had a black and white rubber skirt on its tail end. The skirt concealed a large single hook. A large, twisted, whirling, silver, noise-making type spinner was on a shaft at the head of the lure. Don't think I'm throwing off on the lure by my description because it is a good one. Describing a lure and trying to make it appear beautiful is like describing a bug. Anyway, I had caught one or two bass in what seemed a long period of time, and I was accomplishing little to subside that fishing fever that had been brewing for a long time. I was missing some strikes that I thought should have connected, and there was one other small thing that kept bothering me. There were these little twitching jerks I felt occasionally from the lure on retrieve. I soon solved this in my mind as being bream running at the lure. The lure was a little large for them to tackle so they attacked the waving strips of the rubber and struck at them, causing the twitching jerks.

After mulling the situation over in my mind, I came up with a probable solution. I knew largemouth would hit the lure; also, occasionally, a jack (chain pickerel). And now, since the bream seemed interested, why not try and snag some of them? I could be killing at least three birds with one stone, so to speak, and maybe more. Like raccoon perch or crappie.

I took my pliers and a long shank number six hook from my tackle box. I opened the eye of the hook with my pliers and slipped the eye of the hook over the larger hook on the lure. Then I reclosed the eye. I now had, what you might say, a trailer hook (I'm not sure, but I think this little invention came out a few years later on certain lures).

I began to catch bream. I finished the day with a nice string of fish, and a good combination of varieties.

If you want to make your fishing more enjoyable, and productive, put a little of that creative part of the old brain to work. Buy parts of lures separate and put them together as you think best. As for example, treble hooks of different sizes, rubber skirts of different sizes and color, different types and colors of squirrel tail lures, and spinners ready made for you to snap the lure you chose at the back. Try gold and silver spinners. Try all sizes of spinners, and shapes. Even try making and tying your own lures. There's nothing like catching a fish on a lure you made with your own two little pinkies. And who knows—you may stumble onto one of those lures the fish jump in the boat after. In this case, keep this lure concealed in your tackle box until ready for use.

Not long ago I came up with an idea, simple, as my ideas usually are, but effective and convenient. I tied a piece of rather heavy monofilament to the shaft of my spinners, and at the end of this piece I tied a loop which I could quickly attach to the snap swivel on my line. If I desired more weight to the lure I simply clipped split-lead shot to this piece of mono and did not have to clip them onto the line coming from my reel. Thus, it saved time in not having to take the lead off if I decided to change to another lure, such as a plug.

If you don't think small things like combinations and color have anything to do with catching fish, let me give an example.

A friend and I were fishing familiar water with *the* lure for that particular river. It was a number two gold spinner with a red and white rubber skirt on a number eight (or six) treble hook trailing. It had proved successful (and has many times since) over and over again for bass, jack, bream, crappie and raccoon perch. But on this particular day we weren't catching anything. As usual, we began to alternate different combinations to see what they would hit, if anything. With our different combinations we tried fast and slow retrieves. We tried anything we could think of. Finally, we tied on a number two silver spinner with a black and white rubber skirt on a number eight treble hook trailing. Wham-O! That's what they wanted all along. The lure was identical to the old stand-by lure we had been using except for

the color combinations. It was almost unbelievable. My friend even switched back to the old lure to see if maybe the fish had just started biting. They ignored it.

Don't ask for an explanation, because I can't give you one. I don't know how a fish thinks or what mood he might be in at a particular moment. I don't know what puts him in a biting mood. It could be weather, hunger, or he might be mad as all get out when you sling that terrible looking thing called a lure at him. But I do know one thing. And that's trying to figure out how to catch him. These angles of strategy are the touches that make fishing more enjoyable.



Buy parts of lures separately and put them together in different combinations. This combination took panfish when ready-mades wouldn't.

I'll look after it."

And seeing that he was serious, I gave in, said I supposed we wouldn't die of it and offered to clean it.

"You can't," he said. "I'll have to do it."

Well, really now! Wouldn't you think that any man who had been married for a quarter century would know better than to say a thing like that to his wife? Of course I set out at once to show him that I most certainly *could* dress that shark. And I did, too, but it was one sweet job of work!

A shark's skin fits it very snugly. Rather more snugly than is absolutely necessary, I should think, even from the point of view of the shark. From the cook's point of view there is no *thinking* about it; it is an unfortunate *fact*. I must have sharpened that knife four times at least before I managed to make the first, *tiniest* incision. Doing that, of course, was my second serious error—the first being to have started the project at all. Had I stopped to consider, I might have realized that if it was that hard to cut through the skin in the first place, it would certainly be no easier to get it off, and gutting the animal would do nothing but complicate the procedure. It did. That I ever got it off at all should be an indication of my stolid character to anyone who has ever skinned a shark.

That accomplished, the flesh is exposed and the cook in me began, in spite of previous reservations, to develop an interest. There are no bones, and in this 18-20 inch baby, the spine was still cartilage and easily cut out. That left two 14 inch filets, slightly the worse for wear, yet still relatively handsome. The flesh is thick, firm, and faintly pink. I began to smile and to hum a little tune. But when I *smelled* it.

I put my nose down very close to this lovely pinkish meat and took a good sniff. Shades of an unhappy childhood! Here was the unmistakable *stench of cod-liver oil*.

Now whether this is the characteristic aroma of fresh shark meat or whether I inadvertently bruised the liver in my frantic pulling and hauling to get the hide off, I cannot say. I intend to find out as soon as we have another chance to hook a shark or two. In either case, I should think it a risk these addicted to eating shark would have to take. It really is not very important because that dreadful smell disappears with the application of a squeeze or two of fresh lemon juice. Having discovered this encouraging information, I got out the seasonings, made a trip to the garden

for a leek and some parsley, and turned on the broiler.

Broiled Shark

Butter a shallow pan, sprinkle some finely minced leek and parsley down the center of it, and lay in the shark filet which has already been treated on both sides with lemon juice, salt and some freshly ground black pepper. (If you like garlic, which they all seem to contain, you might rather try one of the Lemon-Pepper marinades.) Sprinkle the rest of the minced leek and parsley on top and distribute a few pieces of butter down the length of the shark. A final dusting of paprika will help it to brown nicely. Pop it under the broiler and watch while it cooks. By the time it is prettily browned it will probably be cooked through. The meat will have turned a beautiful white except for the buttery brownness of the top. It will be quite firm and easy to handle so that it can, if overly thick, be turned over in the pan with no difficulty.

We ate it with whole boiled potatoes and tiny carrots from the garden also doused with parsley butter (but not that from the shark) and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The other filet I froze. Later I thawed it and found that unless I had gotten some lemon on it without realizing it, the freezing had dispersed its "livery" smell. Although the meat looked about the same as it had when I tucked it away, I wondered if freezing had perhaps also dispersed its juiciness and tender flakiness. I decided to deep fry it.

Fried Shark

Cut the flesh into serving size pieces. Dip each in egg beaten with a few drops of water, then in flour, in the egg again and finally in fine, dry bread crumbs. Drop the pieces carefully into hot, deep fat* and fry until golden brown.

With this I served french fried potatoes and a cruet of malt vinegar. It was deliciously moist and good and tasted more like the fish in English Fish and Chips than anything else with which I had tried to duplicate that marvelous dish. I was almost sorry I had not used a proper batter to fry it.

Ah, well . . . next time!

*Just for the record, I found after I had started that I was out of the peanut oil I usually use for this procedure. In fact I had no oil of any kind. I did have a nice big bowl of goose fat left from the Christmas goose (wild) and that was what I used. My husband wanted to know why I didn't make french fried potatoes like that more often and they *were* exceptionally good. Goose fat really is one of the loveliest fats with which to cook, you know.

the woods deeply enough. We gave up and turned our attention to another covey.

We followed the creek to the far side of Fred's broad acres and worked slowly back toward his house.

"Should be a covey in here," he promised as we entered a thicket of brush, briers and broom sedge.

Briers tore at our trousers and pine boughs switched our faces as we followed the dogs into the rough cover. The bird hunter is well advised to wear heavy trousers with reinforced legs for protection from the briers and brush he is often called upon to wade through. Much of the Appomattox County quail country retains the plantation atmosphere of antebellum days, but the modern quail is too smart to linger long where he is so vulnerable. He and his buddies raid the fields for food, but usually stay close to

the edges so they can hustle back to the protection of the woods or rough cover should danger appear. If the bird hunters wants to score consistently, he should plan to hunt such areas. And he needs tough clothing to do so.

Fred, who was a few paces ahead of us, stopped suddenly, turned and signaled for us to move up. We found Rebel on a picturesque point. Duke and Joe got into the act almost immediately and backed Rebel beautifully. It was a sight to thrill any bird dog admirer.

Cecil and I moved abreast of Fred and together we edged forward, nervously anticipating the explosive flush of a big covey. Regardless of a hunter's experience and how many coveys he has picked a bird or two from, I don't believe he is ever completely prepared for the dramatic explosion of a covey of bobwhites. The pulse always quickens

(Continued on page 20)

in anticipation and to even the experienced hunter the experience is a little unnerving. The best hunter is never quite ready.

But we got our adrenalin stirred for nothing. The birds were gone!

This happens frequently in heavily hunted country. Other hunters may get ahead of you, or something else causes a covey to flush. The scent hangs on for awhile and hits an eager bird dog smack in the face. He freezes—dead certain he has located a pot of gold for his master. It's frustrating to both.

The birds had been there all right. It was possible they had fed and retreated to the woods.

A couple of hundred yards farther along a single bird roared from beneath our feet. It cut sharply to our left and in front of Cecil who was holding down that flank. His repeater came off his shoulder and into shooting position in a single smooth motion. The scatter gun barked once and the quail crumbled.

"That was one of them," I shouted as Rebel brought the dead bird to Fred.



Two cock quail from the bountiful Appomattox harvest.

But Cecil wasn't sure. We had wound back into the general vicinity of our first covey and it was possible the bird had flushed or strayed from that gang. If Fred had any thoughts on the matter he didn't express them.

A half hour later we had crossed the highway in front of the house and were hopefully eyeing a soybean field that Fred had harvested the previous fall. It was rich in food and cover.

Fred and Cecil's roots go deep into the history of Appomattox County. Their ancestors settled there long before the Civil War, and they have many relatives among the landowners in the county.

As we waited near the edge of the soybean field and watched the dogs comb it thoroughly, Fred told me the story of his grandfather who served with Lee in the Civil

War. During a lull in the fighting his company was bivouacked near Richmond, 90 miles from Appomattox. Responding to an urge to visit his family he went AWOL, walked home, visited with his family and friends for two days, and then walked back to Richmond and rejoined his company. His absence was never detected.

It was lunch time by the time the dogs had covered the soybean field—thoroughly but unsuccessfully.

"Let's eat," Fred said. "Maybe we'll have better luck this afternoon."

The walk back to the house was a short one. The dogs seemed to realize it was time for a break and fell in behind us. Cecil put Joe and Rebel on leashes and I let Duke climb into my Scout. He curled up on the back seat and was soon enjoying his siesta.

Lunch at Mrs. Woolridge's table is a rare treat. A platter of quail was ample evidence that Fred had been more successful on previous hunts, and delicious black-eyed peas attested to the fertility of the Woolridge soil. Then came coffee and chocolate cake, and I was ready to join Duke on the back seat of the car. Cecil's eyelids got heavy also and Fred began to show concern over the prospects of an afternoon hunt.

"I've got just a couple of hours," said Cecil as we pulled ourselves together for another go at the elusive Appomattox quail.

But what a 2 hour hunt that afternoon produced!

First we found a big covey in a large field blanketed with a cover of golden broom sedge and studded with stately old pines. I dropped back to take some pictures gambling on the birds holding long enough for me to move up into line. But modern quail live a cowboy and Indian existence from November until February and they don't tarry in open fields. Cecil and Fred got a pair from that covey rise, and we watched the rest sail across a little valley and into an alder thicket. We hurried in after them for some fast singles shooting.

An hour later and a half mile away we watched Duke emerge from a wooded area, lift his nose to sniff the air, swing a tight circle and brace to a point. He was on the far side of a harvested corn field waist deep in ragweed.

"That will be tough to wade through," I said.

We tried anyway, but the noise we made threshing through the stuff flushed the covey long before we got within range. It was a big gang, and we watched wistfully as they flew into the woods and disappeared. But with nothing to do except observe their route, we had a good idea where to hunt singles. Since they had not been shot at, there was a good chance they would not scatter too widely.

Rebel found the first game. The birds—three of them—came my way and a load of number 8's tumbled one to the forest floor. I missed the second shot as the brown blur darted between two big oaks.

Filling the 8 bird limit is a real feat in modern day quail hunting. But had time permitted we might have limited out that glorious day in history land. We did well as it was and Fred, being the gracious host he is, refused to take any of the bag. Between us Cecil and I took home a rich harvest of fat quail, leaving Appomattox for the time being to Fred, the tourist and the history buffs.

One day I'll swap my hunting clothes for tourist duds and go back and spend a day among the history markers, but it won't be during the quail season. I would be unable to resist the lure of those Appomattox quail coverts.

Bird of the Month

By JOHN W. TAYLOR
Edgewater, Maryland

SOMBRE-COLORED, quiet of voice and unobtrusive, the brown creeper is not revealed to the casual observer. Ghostlike, it haunts the winter woods, more a wandering spirit than a living bird. Often one is only subconsciously aware of its presence, as if it were only the wind or a falling leaf.

And except for its call-note the creeper would be even less noticeable. Its high, thin lisp usually betrays it, though it takes a practiced ear to detect it. In spring, moved by the impulses of the mating season, it will break into song, a warbler-like trill. Yet it is likely that even that goes unheard, except by lonesome spruces in a northern forest.

Even when in the company of other species, the creeper seems to prefer solitude. In winter, it will sometimes join bands of chickadees, kinglets and nuthatches, but it is never really one of the crowd. Often among such groups there are several individuals of each of the other species, but only a lone creeper.

In manner of feeding, the creeper resembles the woodpeckers, climbing about tree trunks with its stiff, spiny tail as a prop. It belongs, however, to another bird family, the *Certhiidae*, and is the only representative of that tribe in North America. Closely related species live throughout Europe and Asia.

The nest of the creeper is placed, not like a woodpecker's, in an excavated cavity, but under the protection of a loosened strip of bark, partly torn from the tree, like a shingle. Its construction is primarily of twigs, with a lining of softer plant material. The eggs, tiny and white, with a few brown specks, usually number five or six, but there may be as many as nine.

It is probable that few Virginians have seen the nest of the creeper, since its principal breeding range covers the northern tier of states and southern Canada. There is some suitable habitat along the high mountain ranges in our western counties, but it is very restricted. Creepers have been seen in June on Mt. Rogers (part of Virginia's Smyth-Grayson county border), and it is possible that some nest within the state. In fact, Mountain Lake Biological Station's summer ornithology class found a creeper's nest in 1965 in Giles County. Other creepers were seen in the summer of 1968 in Rockingham County, though no nests were discovered.

Generally, it is strictly a winter visitor in these latitudes, appearing with the first chill of autumn and remaining until April.



*The
Brown
Creeper*

FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK SYSTEM ADDS

LATEST CONCEPT IN NATURE CENTERS

By DAVID R. EIKE, SR.
*Environmental Specialist, Fairfax County
Park Authority*

THE Hidden Oaks Nature Center is one of the latest additions to the Fairfax County park system. It is located in Annandale Community Park near the administrative headquarters of the Park Authority. Since its opening in October, 1969, it has entertained over 30,000 visitors. The Nature Center and its facilities and projects are administered by the Division of Conservation and Historical Preservation of the Park Authority.

The Nature Center is unique in design and is situated serenely in a stand of hardwood timber. The Center presents educational exhibits of wildlife, plants, rocks, and minerals that are common to Fairfax County and northern Virginia. In addition to the exhibits, which are changed seasonally, there is a one-and-a-half mile nature trail adjacent to the Center. Another feature of the Center is that even though it is located on the western fringe of the large community of Annandale, it is so secluded that on the nature trail you are fortunate enough to see much of the flora and fauna that is on exhibit within the Center itself. The Center is open the year around except that it is closed on Mondays and legal county holidays. Up-to-date information always can be secured by calling the Center at 941-5009.

The Nature Center is staffed by a complement of trained naturalists who are always on duty to answer questions and to conduct guided tours and programs. Weather permitting, guided tours along the nature trail are available for school and youth groups. The Center presents many and varied programs throughout the year for the benefit of all age groups, but there is one standing requirement—you must make a reservation when you desire the services of a naturalist. During the off-season, a week's notice is sufficient, but during the fall and spring seasons, reservations should be made as far in advance as possible.

So that the reader will not be misled into believing that our naturalists spend all their time as tour guides, it is well that we diverge for just a moment into some of their other activities. The staff of the Nature Center is continually doing major research, collecting, preparing, and programming activities in the natural sciences to keep up with the continual changing of the ecology and environmental conditions brought about by the rapid expansion and urbanization of Fairfax County. In order to record the daily and seasonal changes taking place, the Nature Center publishes the *HONC Newsletter*. This is a quarterly printing of environmental news that is distributed to the visitors of the Center. The naturalist staff also maintains close liaison with other local, State, and Federal agencies that deal with common problems, such as soil erosion, siltation ordinances, water and air pollution. Special projects

are carried on with civic associations, Scout groups, etc., who conduct community service projects in the environmental problems mentioned above.

Another interesting feature of the Nature Center is its summer evening programs which take place one evening a week. During the past year the Center was open on Wednesday evenings, and each week a special program was conducted. As an example, there were evenings devoted strictly to the bird-watcher. There were other evenings for identifying trees and plants, insect life, etc. Each of these programs was very well received by the public. The Nature Center staff encourages comments from its visitors as to new exhibits and ideas for new programs.

Still another worthwhile project of the Nature Center is its periodic teachers' workshops and in-service training programs. These programs are meant for the science teacher and other adults that work with youths in the various science fields and is a great aid to their educational background. The prime purpose behind the teachers' workshops is to acquaint them with the park facilities that are available to them and their science classes. Time is also spent showing the teacher how to develop outdoor science classrooms right on the school property. With the ever growing planning along environmental lines, when new schools are built many of them have the necessary woodlands and fields adjacent to the schools that would make ideal study areas with the proper guidance from the naturalist staff. The workshops are ideally planned with exhibits, lectures, and accompanying color slides of park activities. Teacher participation in these workshops is based on the various school areas within the county. The naturalist staff base their lectures on the material being taught in the schools at the time of the workshop. This assures a continuity of thinking on the part of both the teacher and the naturalist.

Future plans for the Nature Center as well as the other large parks in the county are to identify and to classify all of the flora and fauna that abound in these areas. This will serve a two-fold purpose. First, it will make identification of these species easy for the occasional visitor to the park; and, secondly, it will help many serious-minded conservationists, like members of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, as an example, who have one major objective and that is the building of lifelong observation records of their favorite wildlife, whether it be birds, animals, or trees.

There is only one thing wrong with a setup such as Hidden Oaks. We need several more just like it, and we need them now so that both adults and youths can take advantage of this type of educational and recreational facility.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By TONY PHOENIX

THE NIGHT THE BEARS GOT IN THE BEDROOM

THE title is somewhat misleading. Bears didn't get into the bedroom. Not really. But things couldn't have been much worse if they had. Besides, my friend *thought* there were bears in the bedroom. The result of his misunderstanding was about the same as if he'd had a room full of Bengal tigers or elephants or even kangaroos.

At any rate, his family now calls it "The Night The Bears Got In The Bedroom," and they capitalize it when they say it. It's permissible to talk about it now, out in the open, as long as neither he nor his wife is feeling cranky at the time and wants to take a dig or two at the other. If there is the least indication that one or the other of them feels that this is the time to set the record straight and lay the blame where it belongs, it's the better part of valor to grab your hat and leave without pressing them for customary goodbyes.

It all started innocently enough when he bought a new sleeping bag before the opening of hunting season last year. He is a cautious man—some would say *too* cautious—but things have a way of getting out of hand for him, and he has learned through the years not to crowd Providence in even the mildest way. So, in his customary round-about manner, he prepared in his own way for hunting season.

What he did was decide to try his new sleeping bag out *before* he went hunting. The best way to do this, he reasoned, would be to sleep in it at least one time in familiar surroundings—like, say, the bedroom floor at home.

Now. Here's where the arguments start. Some say he is a nut. Others maintain just as loudly that he is no such thing—that he is, in fact, a man of the future, a prototype. The

latter group argues that so many things go wrong in today's computer-oriented Age of Aquarius that these halting steps in the direction a man wants to go are all that he dare take.

That particular point of argument hasn't been resolved. It has, however, contributed to a much higher level of debate than you usually hear at Joe's Bar and Grill where a lot of hunters gather. In fact, the disagreement as to whether this fellow is a nut or a seer is reported to have caused one of the most satisfying brawls a few evenings ago that anyone can remember since the night the Johnson-Goldwater election results started coming over TV in 1964.

But enough social commentary. We left our friend unrolling his sleeping bag in the middle of his bedroom floor. It is here that we rejoin him.

His wife and three children watched wide-eyed from outside the room as he climbed into the bag. He thinks he might have snapped a little bit at the wife as he told her to put the children to bed. And he's sure he heard her whispering to them as she kissed them good night, asking them not to tell what they had just seen. He's reasonably sure he heard something about "Daddy's condition," and he's certain he overheard the words "getting worse."

His wife tiptoed back into the room with him, climbed into bed, and he rolled over a final time in the sleeping bag.

"The bag was comfortable, as I'd hoped it would be," he said. "I was asleep in a couple of minutes, but I should have known it wouldn't last. Oh no! It was too simple. It was too practical. It made sense, this experiment. And things that make sense don't stand a chance in today's crazy world!" He tends to get agitated along about here and must be diverted from confusing the incident further by dragging in comments about Women's Liberation, campus unrest and the Vietnam war. Somehow, I get the impression that all the subjects are lumped together now in his mind.

Sometime in the middle of the night, the youngest child started crying for a drink of water. "The crying didn't wake me but it did wake my wife," he says. "She was still half asleep when she swung her feet over the side of the bed and started for the children's room. She had forgotten about me on the floor. The first thing she did was step on the back of my neck full force.

"She couldn't have picked a worse time to go clomping around in the dark," he grumbled. "I was right in the middle of a dream—not a very good one either—that an old bear I'd wounded years ago in the Dismal Swamp was chasing me, and he had some of his buddies with him. Lying flat on my stomach, with a big foot in the back of my neck, I thought my time had come. I reacted accordingly."

What he did was to start fighting and ripping his way out of an unfamiliar sleeping bag, hollering all the time at the top of his voice. "This, in turn, woke the other children who started crying," he explains, "and the commotion inside the house started my four large bear dogs to barking in the back yard." Looking back now, he thinks the dogs woke the neighbors.

"After awhile I freed myself from certain death and we found the lights," he says. "Eventually the children and the bear dogs got quiet, but somehow I wasn't sleepy anymore. I spent the rest of the night looking at the remains of a new sleeping bag and thinking long, dark thoughts."

I've suggested that he go out and buy another sleeping bag. I try to tell him that there's nothing inherently dangerous about sleeping in one—as long as somebody doesn't step on him.



Edited by HARRY GILLAM

A Tale That Bears Retelling



Each year we note with interest that two or three bears are bagged by bow-hunters in Virginia but seldom do we hear any details. This time, thanks to Game Warden W. W. Newman of Marion, we have the full story. It seems that Bobby Grimstead, immediately left of the bear, had been in his Smyth County bowhunting blind about one hour when he saw this bear come down out of a tree about 50 yards away and walk in his direction. The bruin came up to within about 3 feet, then turned and started away when Bobby let fly, nailing him through the heart at about 5 yards. Bobby says it took him about 45 minutes to work up enough nerve to take up the bear's trail. The bear, which field dressed at 205 pounds, was found about 55 yards away. Bobby has been bow-hunting for about eight years and has two deer to his credit, but he rates this as his greatest thrill.

Bobby's hunting companions shown in the picture are W. G. Frye, far left; David Yeatts, right center; and Neal Blankenbecker, far right. They and many others came by to view the unusual trophy and after passing out samples of the bear meat Bobby found himself with only three pounds left. Game Wardens W. W. Newman and Beecher Perry reportedly each got away with a tasty morsel. Bobby is a professional meatcutter.

Fish Gains on Solid Food



This largemouth bass gained about 4 ounces when he ate this one meal consisting of a 4 ounce rock nearly 3 inches long. Robert S. Taylor of Rileyville caught the 3 pound fish with such unusual tastes from the South Fork of the Shenandoah. It is a good thing he didn't enter it in a fishing contest.

New Record White Bass



This state record white bass was caught from Occoquan Reservoir by James L. Atkins of Woodbridge. It weighed 3 pounds 3 ounces on the scales at the Petrola Marina, beating the previous record by 1 ounce.

Golden Eagle Returns

Golden Eagle Passports are in again for 1971 as a result of the clamor that erupted when the program was scrapped as impractical a year ago. Retirees who camp and are able to use the permit to cover much of their lodging during extended travel were reportedly among the leaders in the fight to get the permit reinstated. The new permit will sell for \$10 and will be good for the calendar year of 1971. It covers most fees at recreation areas operated by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, although additional fees are charged for camping and other activities in some instances.

All revenue from the annual permit, from daily entrance fees and from user charges levied at many federal recreation areas is deposited in the Land and Water Conservation Fund administered by the Interior's Bureau of Recreation. Other sources of revenue to the Land and Water Conservation Fund include receipts from the sale of surplus federal real property, motorboat fuel taxes, and some revenue from mineral leases on the Outer Continental Shelf.

The Golden Eagle Passports can be purchased by mail from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Post Office Box 7763, Washington, D. C. 20044, or at field offices of participating federal agencies.

Lady Lands Man-Sized Fish



Maxine Horsley of Martinsville caught this 19 pound 4 ounce citation striped bass while trolling a redfin lure in Buggs Island Lake.



Edited by ANN PILCHER

Collectors Needed

The Virginia Herpetological Society and its BULLETIN, a newsletter appearing at least six times a year, should be of considerable interest to science teachers, young people and others having a particular interest in the lower vertebrates. Principal activity is a state survey of native reptiles and amphibians. Data is particularly needed from several Virginia counties where collecting has been extremely thin or not attempted. The BULLETIN includes articles and comments by readers on matters relating to Virginia herpetology, and provides a ready reference source on amphibians and reptiles of the state.

The Society has published two "special" bulletins—SNAKES OF VIRGINIA and TURTLES OF VIRGINIA—and is preparing another on lizards.

For more information on the Virginia Herpetological Society, its BULLETIN, and collecting data forms, write VHS Secretary, 4706 Tallahassee Avenue, Rockville, Maryland.

Ruritans Sponsor Safety Course

Congratulations to Hanover Ruritan Club on sponsoring a successful Hunter Safety course held November 4th and 5th at Lee-Davis High School in Mechanicsville. Forty-five of the 52 12-16 year old boys enrolled in the classes received certificates and "Safe Hunter" badges certifying course completion. O. L. Oatman, Arthur J. Boswell, J. B. McGhee, Jr., and W. R. Mitchell provided the four hours of instruction.

Wildlife: The Real Winners



A Hunting Story

Thirteen-year-old Larry Branham of Springfield proved himself a qualified hunter when he bagged a nine-point buck east of Woodstock on the opening day of deer season. The hunter took his first deer last season with a bow and arrow, and downed this year's 150-pound plus animal with one rifle shot while the deer was sprinting across a field in the George Washington National Forest. When hit, the buck turned and started full speed at the boy's father, Joe, who was hunting nearby. Joe yelled to his son not to fire again and dove behind a stump for protection, but the deer fell dead fifteen yards short of the hunter. Last year, Larry was hit in the leg by a bullet accidentally fired by his father while unloading a rifle; he was one of three hunters injured on opening day. One of the injured later died from his wound.

—THE SHENANDOAH HERALD
Woodstock

From newspapers around the state comes news of young Nimrod's successes —DEER: 12-year-old Alvin Runion downed a 10-point, 166-pound buck sporting massive antlers with one shot from a .30-06 near Fulks Run on the last Saturday of November. The buck was the first seen by the Timberville hunter in his first deer season.

Nine-year-old Charles Sipe, Jr., bagged a 7 pointer while he and his dad were hunting with dogs in Fluvanna County. Bruce Wright, 14, of Boydton, killed a 15 point, 160 lb. buck November 21 near Buggs Island Lake.

Dalton Driskill of Darlington Heights, age 15, downed a 12 point buck in late November. The Driskills plan to have

Safety Course Graduates



At Amherst High School a hunter safety course conducted October 26-27 and November 5-6 by State Game Warden R. B. Chenault was successfully completed by 161 9th grade boys (many of whom are pictured above). Amherst Rotarians took care of literature and badge expenses involved in the course.

the head with 24 inch rack mounted. The family feels they have been sighting the deer for five or six years, so feel proud to have brought him down.

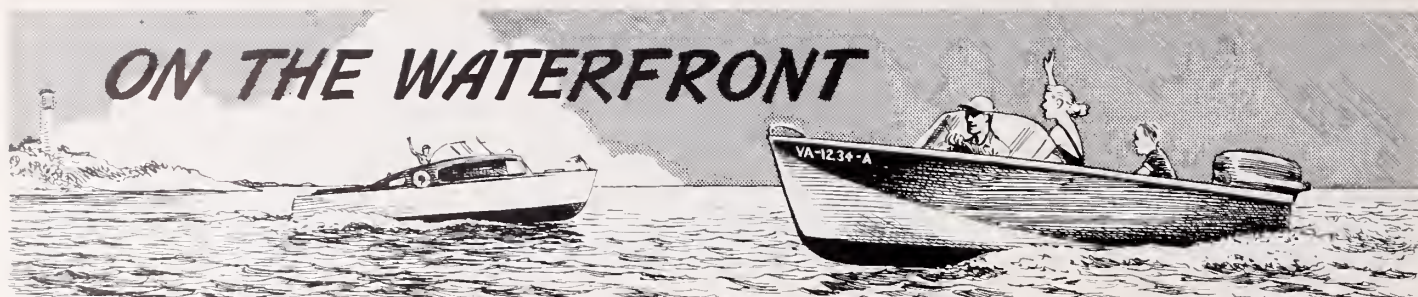
Thirteen-year-old Steven Simmons had no problem getting his 8-point buck home. His father simply hooked it to his tow truck and hauled it away. The buck, which field dressed to 155 pounds, was bagged by the Botetourt County lad on his great-grandfather's farm.

Wiley Robbins, Jr., of Broadford, brought down an 8 point, 200 pound buck on Flat Top Mountain.

TURKEY kills include a 20 pound gobbler taken with a 30-30 rifle by 16 year old John Puffenbarger of Doe Hill on Jack Mountain December 4. Twelve-year-old Paul Howard bagged a 20½ pound tom near McKenney on November 27. Its beard measured 11 inches.

Orange County High School Vo-Ago Instructor David Guzy, second from right, examines some milo with Sammy Middleton, center, who was named winner of the Orange County wildlife food patch contest. Runners-up Bobby Estes, left, and Jerry Crane, right, were among 14 boys who planted and entered the local competition that was sponsored by the Virginia Game Commission in cooperation with Orange County businessmen. The students selected sites, planted and cared for the patches which provide food for birds and other wildlife. Milo, millet, soybeans, barley, lespedeza and other seeds were planted in the project. Sammy's patch was cited for its proximity to a stream where wildlife could find water and also to a brush area where there was nearby protection for the birds and animals which feed at the patches. Members of the Virginia Game Commission inspected the entries and named winners. Sammy is in his second year of FFA at high school and works in the school's farm placement program at a dairy near Somersett.

Courtesy: The Orange Review



Edited by JIM KERRICK

If You Strike A Submerged Object

When a boat strikes a submerged object, it is usually because of human carelessness. The operator either has not paid attention to his navigation and has run the boat into shallow or foul water, or he has failed to keep a sharp lookout. Careful piloting and an alert lookout will avoid such trouble.

However, you may hit a waterlogged piece of timber floating just below the surface, an uncharted obstruction, or a fish pot or buoy run underwater by current. So always be prepared to take instant action if the thump and jolt that usually signals such a collision is felt.

Stop your engine instantly, take it out of gear and drift or, if in close quarters or a hazardous area, anchor.

Open up all hatches and floorboards giving access to the bilges and look for leaks. If water is rising, determine where it is coming in. Look around the stern, where the bottom may be holed by a propeller blade, strut or rudder. A twin-screw boat is more prone to this type of damage than one with a single propeller protected by a skeg.

If the boat is leaking badly you may be able to start the engine (in neutral) and use its cooling water intake as an emergency pump. A few exceptionally well-equipped boats have valves which, by turning, will pump water from the bilge instead of outside. Lacking such a convenience, you may be able to close the through-hull intake valve, pull off the hose leading from it to the engine circulating pump, and pump the bilge water through the circulating system and overboard. Rig some sort of stiff screen—ordinary metal window or hatch screening can be used—around the bilge intake to prevent debris (most bilges are dirty) from clogging the line. Watch the water level carefully. If the pump removes water faster than it is leaking in, don't let it run dry, and "burn up" the engine.

If the leak can be reached from inside, try to stop or slow the flow of water with an internal patch. This should consist

first of some soft material, like a cushion, clothing or other fabric, backed up by a flat, hard piece of wood or metal. This in turn may be shored and wedged in place, if it's in an accessible place.

Alternatively, it may be possible to get a "collision mat" over the outside of the hole. This would be a sail, side-curtain, mattress or similar object, pulled and held in place under the hull by ropes to its corners, one or more of which must go under the keel to the far side of the boat. Pressure of water will help hold an outside patch in place.

If there is no serious leak, or when it's under control, try to get underway with your engine, very slowly at first. The propeller and shaft may be bent by the collision, causing vibration. If there is not too much vibration, run SLOWLY to the nearest port. If vibration is excessive, shut off engine, stay where you are and try to get a tow. Use radio or visual distress signal.

On making port, if there is any indication of damage to hull or gear, have the boat hauled immediately by the nearest boatyard or, if none is available, lay her ashore alongside a pier or bulkhead and at low tide inspect bottom, propeller, shaft, etc.

Don't leave the boat afloat, unattended, until you are sure she is not leaking. Never depend on an automatic electric bilge pump to keep her dry—pump or battery might fail. Stay aboard or engage someone to do so.

Check your strut bolts, rudder post, stuffing box, and engine alignment, as well as the propeller and shaft.

If the boat has been run with a bent propeller or shaft, even through vibration was slight, check the strut bearing or outside stuffing box for excessive wear and loose holding bolts.

Prevent Fouled Plugs

Under normal running conditions one set of spark plugs should last an entire season. If you have to replace plugs more often, excess oil in the fuel mixture could be the problem.

"On Board" Tools And Spares

Every boat needs a kit of tools and spare parts for emergency repairs. The size and makeup of such kits depends on the boat, her equipment, how far she cruises away from repair facilities, and, to some extent, on the abilities of her owner.

THE ENGINE: For the engine, wrenches, screwdrivers, pliers, etc., to fit the engine are essential along with any specialized tools your engine requires. A file, a cold chisel and a peen hammer are pretty close to indispensable as is a roll of electrician's tape.

The most commonly needed engine spares are probably spark plugs, points, condensers and pump parts. Get from your engine's builder a list of spare parts recommended to be carried with his particular engine. One manufacturer lists three different kits. The simplest, strictly electrical, includes spark plugs, distributor points, ignition coil, distributor rotor and cap, and condenser. The next larger has these plus gaskets, a fuel pump kit and a "Maintenance Handbook." Kit No. 1 adds such things as valve springs and complete fuel pump and water pumps.

Spare hose and hose clamps may come in handy, as may neoprene tubing.

Many owners who cruise far from home, or in any driftwood infested waters, carry spare propellers.

RIGGING: In the rigging department, a sailboat should have spare fabric for sail patching, a sail repair kit of needles, thread and tools, and a coil of rope to replace a sheet or halyard. Wire clamps or U-bolts are handy for temporary repairs to sailboat standing rigging and to steering cable in motorboats. Spare shackles of various sizes are useful.

MISCELLANEOUS: Marine toilets are more prone to get out of kilter than the shore-based kind. Engine tools will do the work, but special spare valves, pump leathers, etc., are required. Several manufacturers put out complete toilet overhaul kits.



PURPLE FINCH



RED CROSSBILL



WINTER VISITORS



JUNCO



SNOW BUNTING

JW TAYLOR

VIRGINIA'S FUR BEARING MAMMALS



Imfower

None of these animals may be hunted, killed, or trapped except during the prescribed open seasons, and may not be held in captivity except under a fur farming or other appropriate permit. Permits are not issued to hold fur bearing animals in captivity as pets.